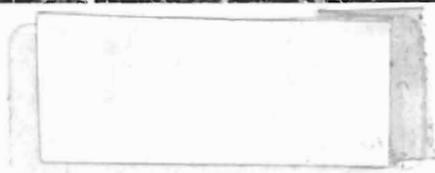


R. Glenn Anderson

/1924-1981/



IN MEMORIAM
R. Glenn Anderson
1924 – 1981

(Prepared by Norman E. Borlaug)

We are assembled here today to honor an exceptional individual, a peerless scientist and colleague, a stimulating leader, a hunger-fighter "par excellence", a humanitarian, a loving and devoted son, brother, husband and father, and a friend to all.

Glenn Anderson's passing has left a huge void in the lives of the Anderson family, in CIMMYT, in the Rockefeller Foundation, in the international fraternity of wheat scientists, and among untold numbers of farmers and political leaders who have gained much from his knowledge and counsel.

All of us who knew him find it difficult to accept the tremendous loss to mankind of this outstanding person. We were ill-prepared for his sudden departure. Yet, we should take solace in the way in which he left us, for up until a few hours before his demise, he was doing what he enjoyed most—exploring new areas and new ways to apply research knowledge to increase food production and, thereby, alleviate human suffering and misery.

Glenn was born and grew up on a small general grain-livestock farm in Ontario. This setting and the experience of learning personally of the hard physical labor, of the required investments, and of the biological, meteorological, and economic risks associated with farming in order to eke out a living from the soil, conditioned him well for his subsequent life's work. His boyhood was spent during the depths of the economic depression of the 1930s. This experience left an indelible impression on him for he never forgot the drudgery of heavy farm work and the economic odds facing the farmer. The work schedules he learned—from daylight until dark in the fields during the crop season and in the woods cutting pulpwood during the winter—was subsequently reflected in the motivation and work ethic he pursued during his entire scientific career.

I first met Glenn in Winnipeg at the First International Wheat Genetics Symposium in 1958. At that time, he was a Senior Research Officer at the

Canada Department of Agriculture, working on the genetics of rust resistance in bread wheat. I was immediately impressed by his scientific knowledge and research skills and programs. I was also taken by his warm friendly personality and especially by his winning smile which won him friends everywhere. I was to see more of him and learn to know him better in subsequent years in the Yaqui Valley in Sonora, where he came to harvest the "off-season" wheat breeding nurseries of the Canada Department of Agriculture that were growing on our experimental station.

Through long hours of discussions in the fields and in the evenings, I learned to know him well. He was a man with unusual intellectual capacity, who had acquired a broad and excellent education across many scientific disciplines. Moreover, he had outstanding motivation, he strove to excel scientifically—and he had little patience with mediocrity or sloppiness in science. It was obvious he was also a man of vision who had little patience with the status quo, with bureaucracy, and lethargy. He was, at once and at the same time, an entomologist, plant pathologist, geneticist, plant breeder, agronomist, self-made economist, planner—a complete wheat scientist in the broadest sense—and finally a farmer. He knew how and when to prod political leaders and how to escape the suffocating grasp of the bureaucrats. This combination of outstanding characteristics, combined with his engaging personality, fascinated me. He was clearly the kind of scientist and man I wanted on my wheat team but there was no position available. Our *Office of Special Studies Wheat Program* (the Mexican Government-Rockefeller Foundation Program) was winding down and would soon be transferred to a new Mexican agricultural research institute—the INIA of today.

But soon a new opportunity developed. In 1964, following some preliminary experimentation in India that I was privileged to engage in with Dr. Swaminathan and his scientific colleagues using the INIA-Rockefeller Foundation "Mexican semi-dwarf wheats", a request came to me from Dr. Ralph Cummings, The Rockefeller Foundation Agricultural Program Director in India, asking me to search for an outstanding wheat scientist to serve as Joint Coordinator for the All-India Wheat Research and Production program.

Mr. Lennard Bickel, an Australian science writer, in the book *Facing Starvation* tells the story of what followed better than I can. I quote:

'When Norman Borlaug searched his mind in 1964 for a scientist to help spark the green revolution in wheat in India, he knew it would require a man of superlative character and training, a cool man with courage and the heart to fight. He could think of no one better qualified than Dr. Glenn Anderson of the Canada Department of Agriculture.

After completing his work in the Canadian nurseries in the Yaqui Valley unlike other foreign visiting scientists, he did not rush for the first airplane leaving for Winnipeg, Minneapolis, or Fargo. He stayed to broaden his horizons, spending one or two days in the plots discussing worldwide wheat production problems.

Borlaug had tested Anderson's mettle by devil's advocate arguments, and had once taken him fishing along the irrigation canal, seeking out the strength of his convictions. Anderson filled the bill. But was he available—and willing?

Anderson was ill with hepatitis when Borlaug called his home. Anderson was very interested, and before he was completely well he flew to New Delhi. Here he met Dr. Swaminathan and went with him on a tour of the wheat-growing areas of northern India. These new friends were to become the field commanders of the great wheat revolution in India.

Late in April of 1964, Anderson flew back to New York and asked his wife if she was ready to start packing for India. She was. He and his family arrived in New Delhi on August 15, 1964. The entire Rockefeller Foundation staff turned out to meet them, including the country director, Dr. Ralph Cummings. He said to Anderson: 'Borlaug hired you because you know your business. India does not have enough to eat. You are to help remedy that situation. How you achieve it is your decision'.

Within one year, while acting as Joint Coordinator, Dr. Anderson, with the skilled assistance of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, and Dr. S.P. Kohli, had formed and fused together an enthusiastic, smooth-working wheat research, extension and production team. Within one year, Dr. Cummings, at a New

York Meeting of Rockefeller Foundation scientists, said: 'Norm, how did you identify a man with the unique combination of characteristics that Glenn possesses?' My reply: 'I couldn't miss him, he identified himself'."

From this beginning, Dr. Anderson started his new career in international agricultural research. His outstanding contributions to world leaders, wheat scientists and farmers throughout the world continued to have a major impact. The significance of his work and his strong presence in the lives of many will not be forgotten. He was a man driven by the belief that science and scientists could make a difference in feeding a hungry world.

The sparks of change that Glenn catalyzed, together with the collective effort of a large number of scientists in many countries, have exploded into a revolution in wheat production in many of the developing food-deficit countries of the world. Within 10 years, Indian wheat production had doubled, in 15 years it has tripled. Largely because of this revolution in wheat, India has become self-sufficient in grain production and recently drawing on large buffer stocks of grain accumulated from domestic production survived without difficulty the worst drought experienced in 80 years. Similarly, over the same period, wheat production in Pakistan has tripled, production in Turkey has doubled, and a new exciting revolution in wheat production is moving forward in Bangladesh. Sparks of change in agricultural production have been lit by Glenn in many other parts of the world. It is for those of us who remain to fan these sparks into new revolutions in wheat production.

As a scientist, teacher, administrator, and human being, Glenn Anderson was an inspiration to all. His dedication to the improvement of the human condition was total. His friendly smile, kindness, and honesty toward everyone he met, from the most destitute farmer to the most successful politician, were unflinching. Glenn Anderson was a man who acted while many procrastinated. His enormous personal sacrifices were made so that others might suffer less. In closing, we, and millions of others, must acknowledge that the world is a better place in which to live because of Glenn's 57 years of life. It is now up to us to improve the lot of mankind today, and for those who will follow. Glenn's absence is deeply felt by all those at CIMMYT, and by thousands of others around the world. As his colleagues, friends, and loved ones, we must now carry on, gaining strength and courage as we recall the exemplary manner in which Dr. Robert Glenn Anderson lived his life.

received 28th April, 1981.